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ITS INSTRUCTION AND ITS GOVERNMENT.

THE

INAUGURAL ADDRESS

OF

REV. DR. WILLIAM L. BRECKINRIDGE,

PRESIDENT OF CENTRE COLLEGE.

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THE INAUGURAL ADDRESS OF REV. DR. WILLIAM L. BRECKINRIDGE, PRESIDENT OF CENTRE COLLEGE. DELIVERED IN PRESENCE OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES, AND OF THE SYNOD OF KENTUCKY, IN SESSION AT DANVILLE, OCTOBER 14, 1864.

Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen, Members of the Board of Trustees of Centre College: Mr. Moderator and Brethren of the Synod of Kentucky:

You will allow me to address myself to you all, as Guardians of the School, whose principal charge you have seen fit to assign to me.

I hold the office at your pleasure, and by your good will. On no other terms could I ever wish to hold it; and this, not only because my brethren are the persons with whom, above all others, I desire to be associated, but also and more, because the school is yours—founded, built up, and supported by the Church to which we all belong; and now, as one generation passeth away, and another generation cometh, resting on your hands, the sons come up in the place of the fathers.

Believing with you, that all events are so many Divine appointments—for even the lot is cast into the lap, but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord—I recognized His hand in the circumstances which have led me to this place, and I accepted the conclusion as the ordering of His Providence. Looking only at myself, I had shrunk from the difficult and solemn trust which it imposed—the more when I thought of the men whom I was to follow in this work. But looking at the whole matter, I could not do otherwise than undertake the service

to which you called me. The responsibility was, in large part, with you—my share of it being met when I should do what I could to carry out your will.

The generous confidence you have given me is the more gratefully acknowledged, because I count it a token of the Divine goodness and favor to me, that you were not only willing so to use your trust, but that you desired, without any seeking of mine, to commit these great interests to my hands.

You can not be indifferent to my opinions and my purposes concerning them. You must wish to know from myself how I propose to conduct them. And to meet your wishes in this respect, I stand here now to say plainly, in your presence, what I hold touching our work, and how I desire to perform my part of it as a servant of the Church for the Lord's sake. I trust you will approve the views which I shall submit to you. Otherwise that you will correct them, so that by your superior wisdom we may be directed in a better way.

I. First of all, then, I look upon this College as a Christian Institution.

The people who were foremost in laying its foundations, were Christian people, drawing their principal motives herein from the interest they felt in the kingdom and glory of our Lord. They were not behind other citizens in their love for the whole country, or their concern for the honor and welfare of this Commonwealth, whose advantage they especially consulted; but in this enterprise their chief concern was about the Church, and they undertook their work, first and mainly, for the sake of the Lord Christ. They were friends of education, but they were, far more, friends of religion; and it was out of regard for this grand interest, which lay nearest to their hearts, and which, in their calm judgment, they set far above all, that they put their hands to this work. So we read every history that has been written—so we interpret every tradition that has come down to us—so we recall every recollection that abides with any of us—of the rise of this movement. I well remember it in my early days, when I was just beginning to assume the responsibilities of manhood. The ministers were gathering for this cause the gifts of the people, their offerings to the Church, for the love of Christ, and His truth as they held it. The first religious contribution of any consequence I ever made was cast into this

treasury, as the treasury of God, no less in the interest of religion than any other object of Christian benevolence.

In the early settlement of this State, our Fathers of the Presbyterian order—few in numbers, but strong in the faith which has distinguished this branch of the Church wherever it has had a place, steadfast friends of sound learning, which they held to be among the surest and best supports of true religion—set their hearts on the religious education of their children. They wished the preacher and the schoolmaster to go hand-in-hand—often, in fact, going in the same person; and wherever they set up the public ordinances of Divine worship, they desired the school-house to stand under the shadow of the house of God.

As these principles were expanded, and the means and opportunities of illustrating them achieved, they aimed to establish schools of higher grade—always to be consecrated to the Gospel, dignified by its presence, adorned by its beauty, controlled by its power. We need not trace here the circumstances which disappointed their hopes and broke up their plans, until, at length, all these were revived and brought together in the founding of this College, on which the leading men of that day in our Church laid themselves out to gather into one the interest and influence of all their people, that by these combined, with the blessing of God, they might build up an institution of learning to the praise of His name for many generations.

Such having been its origin, we might expect to find its history full of His mercies, for He has never been "unrighteous to forget the work and labor of love, which His servants have showed toward His name." And so it has been. No smaller measure of success in any respect, than was reasonably to be looked for, in return for the exertions made, has ever discouraged its friends. No heavier disaster than is common to man, has ever cast a gloomy shade over its prospects. Its best lovers and its greatest benefactors, indeed, must go to their graves and their recompense, each at the appointed time. Its most untiring, useful, and honored servants must rest from their labors in its behalf, for God has greater works than these for them to do, in a better field than this. But heavy as these losses have been to the College, and sore as the distress and

sorrow they have brought to its friends, no misfortune has befallen it which we may not hope that time, and patience, and the blessing of God, will repair; while signal mercies have run along its track all the time—its path strewn with marvelous proofs of a kind and favoring Providence, and still more marvelous proofs of the loving kindness of sovereign and infinite grace showered down on them that were serving it, and on them that it was serving. Many of our best ministers, ruling elders, and private members of the Church, in this Synod, and away beyond its bounds, in every direction, were brought to the Saviour's feet while pursuing their studies here. If you should strike off their names from the roll of our brethren, of the living and of the dead, you would sadly mar its beautiful fullness. If the sum of their effective labors in the cause of Christ were thrown out of the grand account, and all the good He has been pleased to accomplish through them were substituted by the evil they have put down and destroyed, what a wail of anguish the reversing would bring up from many hearts, at home and abroad! for some of them have gone to distant people, and with skillful and diligent hands have scattered knowledge among the ignorant, and borne the message of grace and salvation to the heathen.

Moreover, there is reason enough to believe, that not a few young men have received religious impressions here, which were not lost when they went away; but, in God's own time, and by His merciful goodness, they were matured in the peaceable fruits of righteousness, and finally gave to the country and to the Church some of the first citizens and most useful Christians—while others, coming as young and recent servants of our Lord, grew up under the opportunities, which they enjoyed here in the pursuit of knowledge, and the means of grace, into the stature of men in Christ Jesus—some of them, able ministers of the New Testament—more of them owned and blessed of the Lord in other stations. To say nothing of many more, who, coming here without previous religious training, and either wholly indifferent to the Gospel, or prejudiced against it, were so far brought under its influence as to count themselves its friends, and to be in many ways its supporters in after-life, although we know not whether they were brought under its saving power. It has pleased God in these ways to send out

hence imperceptible but powerful forces, into families and neighborhoods, where they have done great good—especially in behalf of religion.

It has been remarkably so in the society immediately around the College, and closely connected with it. This community, contributing in many wise and generous methods to its growth and improvement, has received back again into its bosom an hundred fold for all that it has done—nay, for all that it has proposed—in this sacred work. When this house of worship was in its building, its colossal proportions, as they seemed to many, so much beyond the requirements of the occasion, the minister said, in his zeal and his hope, "We are building for the millennium." But, as one of our brethren—himself an example of much that has been said, a son, and now a pillar of the College—lately reminded a church meeting, when he was persuading the people to rise and build another house, the millennium has not come, but the place is too strait for us—these large dimensions have shrunk to a littleness that cramps our swollen numbers. Doubtless, in the good providence and the amazing grace that have brought out this growth, many influences were at work; but no one will dispute, that for the means to this end, the College has been the principal thing—the College and the men it has gathered and held here, through so many years—especially, that eminent servant of God, who, during the lifetime of a generation, guided the College, while he preached the Gospel to this people, to whose great works you will quickly join—in your warm recollections, and in your sorrow over these bereavements, the signal abilities, and the arduous labors of his successor. And as long as the happy influence of the preaching and the lives of these, our honored brethren, shall abide among these people and their children, so long must they feel that they have reason to thank God for this Institution. I think, too, we may justly count the School of Theology, with all it has done and may yet do for this society, among the benefits it has reaped from the College. The same considerations, which prompted our fathers and ourselves to desire a school of academic instruction for our sons, led us on to desire a school of professional training for so many of them as were to be ministers of the Word. The one naturally drew

the other after it, and planted it by its side. Else the Seminary had hardly been here.

Coming to my work, then, at your bidding, I have come to it with these conceptions of it uppermost in my mind, and with the desires, which spring out of them, strongest in my heart. Nothing in the expressions of your will, when you called me to it, pleased me so well, as that which declared, "that the religious instruction of the students shall form a very special and important part of the President's labors, and that the Professors shall assist him in this work," which they are all ready to do.

I desire every good thing for these boys, and for all who shall follow them—every treasure of useful knowledge that can go to make a scholar rich—every accomplishment that may adorn a gentleman—every virtue that will give dignity to a citizen. But most of all, and far above all, I desire for them the mercy that shall make them the children of God through faith in Jesus Christ. And if, by infinite grace, I can help to lead them to His Cross, and hold them at His feet, then my work will be done the best for their welfare, and the most for your honor as over me in the Lord. We are not at liberty, and we have no heart, to do this work in a sectarian spirit—not, first and mainly, for the sake of that branch of the Church, which we love so well, but, first and mainly, to swell the company of true believers in Christ, and to save these souls from death to the glory of our Lord. To these ends, therefore, and in this spirit, with the help of God, I propose, as long as I hold this office, to direct my earnest prayers, and my diligent exertions, in preaching the Gospel, and in every other form of teaching which it may be your pleasure for me to employ.

Our precise methods of religious instruction may be most clearly set forth in the terms appointed to us by the Board of Trustees. We were required to submit to its consideration a special report, with a distinct scheme, embodying our conclusions on this subject, which, approved by the Board, became a law for us. It is now in use, with no discontent on the part of our pupils, and with hopeful promise. At the hazard of some repetition, I introduce it here:

"The President and Professors, having maturely considered the subject to which this order of the Board of Trustees refers, respectfully submit this report:

"There is no difference of opinion among us, as to the importance of this department of instruction above all others—understanding, as we do, by the religious instruction of the students, exertions to fix, in their minds, just and clear knowledge of Divine things, and to bring them, by God's blessing, under the saving influence of His revealed Word. This Institution was founded by His servants with a view to the liberal education of the sons of His people, in which they embraced, as a leading thought and a main desire, their training on Christian principles, and the constant inculcation of Divine truth—in the special hope that He would be pleased to use the work of their hands for the increase of laborers in the Gospel ministry.

"The history of the College shows that He has had respect to the desires and the exertions of His servants. The large number of ministers and other pious men, who have received their education in chief part, and in like manner their religious impressions, here, makes this very plain.

"While we thank the Lord for all His kindness in the past, we pursue our work as He will help us, in His fear, with the hope, that the favor, which He has shown to those who have gone before us herein, will not be withheld from us in our day, nor from those who shall come after us. The late manifestation of the presence and power of the Holy Spirit confirms us in this hope, and encourages us to do whatever He will enable us to do, for the promotion of the great ends of the Institution.

"We do not withhold from the Board a frank expression of our sense of the difficulties attending this work of religious instruction, even in a Christian College. The students, for the most part, come out of the families of God's people; but so many of them, as have not been renewed by His grace, come to us with the old evil heart of unbelief, and this does not love to study, as it does not love to follow, the Word of God.

"Then, there may be found some difficulty in adjusting the direct religious instruction of all the classes to their other studies, in such arrangements as will satisfy all concerned, touching the due proportions of each. It is not desirable to excite the discontent of parents, who do not highly value religious knowledge in their children, by seeming to engage their attention to it in too great proportion to other subjects of study.

"There are inconveniences, too, in calling them together at

other times than those recognized as College hours—so many of them lodging at distant places, even for miles around the town—while we do not think that much good is to be expected for the students from reluctant and compulsory attendance on religious instruction, at hours and under circumstances inconvenient and distasteful to them.

"The opinions and testimony of those, who have been engaged here, for many years, in the instruction of Bible Classes on the Sabbath day, add nothing to our confidence in this method for us, or to our hope of much advantage from it, in the future, over the little, as we suppose, in the past time.

"Our main hope for good in this matter, rests, under God's blessing,

"1. On the simple, clear, and faithful preaching of the Gospel—on which, we think, the students ought to be induced to wait, by all such influences as can be wisely used, and by all the attractions which can be justly offered to them—with the least that might be repulsive—reserving every authoritative requirement as a final necessity. They understand our rule, our wishes, and our expectations—and we believe they rarely violate them—while we do not habitually institute inquiries on this subject, in any formal manner.

"2. On apt, judicious, and frequent mingling, with regular instruction in their usual studies, of the applications of Divine truth to other branches of knowledge, and its appeals to the heart and the conscience. There are few, if there be any studies pursued here—we believe there are none—which do not afford occasions of doing this, if, by grace, we can use a true skill, a tender and earnest love of truth; and a deep concern for lost souls, in the improvement of these occasions.

"3. On the regular, systematic, and careful study of the Word of God, by all the classes, as a College exercise. We believe that it would comport with the pious and wise designs of the founders of this Institution—with the views of its best friends and supporters in this day—and with the solid advantage of the students, for the life that now is, and for that which is to come, to make the Sacred Scriptures a text-book for every class, throughout the entire course of instruction.

"Accordingly, we recommend to the Board of Trustees, to order an arrangement, which will give to each class a weekly

recitation on the Word of God, in our own tongue—with such use of the original as may seem meet to the instructor. And we judge, that the most suitable time for this exercise will be the first hour on Monday morning—beginning the secular labors of the week with this sacred study. We think the aim ought to be to interest the students in the Divine Word, for its plain sense—in hope that the Holy Spirit will apply it to their minds with its saving power, as that which is able to make one wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus—while we would leave the more precise methods of instruction, in their details, to the judgment of the teacher."

II. In the second place, and subordinate only to the first, I conceive of this College as A SCHOOL FOR SOUND LEARNING. And by this I mean solid, thorough, useful education—the training of the sons of the Church, and the youth of the country who should resort to it, with such methods of instruction, and in such branches of knowledge, as would make them fair scholars. Its founders were friends of education in this sense, and were content with nothing short of this measure and extent of good learning. Few of them, perhaps, were finished scholars—few of them even aspired to this grand distinction—a rare attainment in our more favored day—impossible to many in the circumstances of those revered men. But their prevalent, if not their universal, sentiment was a high value of knowledge and wisdom, obtained by laborious study in the course of education—that is, in the pursuit of learning.

Such, beyond doubt, are the sentiments, clearly held and warmly cherished by the members of this Board of Trustees, and by the ministers and ruling elders, who compose this court of the Lord's house. I will do my utmost to carry them out, in all of which I am well assured of the cordial concurrence of my colleagues.

I draw my sense of our duty, in part, from what I understand to be your aims and wishes in this matter. You are the governors and supporters of a school in which faithful instruction is to be given, to the end that its pupils, well taught in whatever they profess to learn, may become good scholars therein. You desire no less than this for your sons, when you put them in our care. You may justly hold us to account, if we come short of our best exertions to effect it. You will

require the same for the sons of your friends, who, under the sanction of your names as you manage this great trust, commit them to our charge. We promise, in the fear of God, and out of respect to all our obligations, that we will give good instruction, and that we will do what we can to inspire our pupils with a desire to receive it. It shall be our desire, not to give them a show and pretense of knowledge; but to make them truly study, and well understand what we try to teach them—persuaded that the great ends of education are in a manner lost, if this be not gained.

Our theory is just and wise. If we could fulfill its great designs in every case, the benefits we would dispense were beyond all estimate. The elegant ornaments of a liberal education—the refining and elevating influences of good scholarship—the clearness and early maturity of thought it would impart—the fair sweep and ever-swelling force of knowledge, even in the measure of its acquisition in the College course—how well they would prepare a youth to choose his path in life, and to endure the further toil that should make him master of his calling, whatever that might be! And when this was gained, how grandly would it all impel him, as he started in his career of active labors, and usefulness, and honor! Oh! that we could make them all see how much they might gain by diligent and honest study now, and how much they are sure to lose by the lack of it! We covet this influence over them for their own sakes, and we do not forget that it would put a crown on your heads, gentlemen, and on ours. But we may not repress the mournful acknowledgment of the imperfectness of our success. As on the other and far higher interest, so on this, we are subject to many a sad disappointment. The utmost diffidence will not allow us to ascribe it to ourselves. Our brethren who have preceded us in this work, with their gifts, and skill, and large experience, were obliged to make the same acknowledgment; and we fear the day is far off, when the lamentation will be no longer repeated. Indeed, some of the obstacles to complete success are inherent in the nature of things, and it is impossible to remove or overcome them. Some of them belong to the times we live in, and these will give way when the times shall change, and better days shall come again. Some of them are due to the state of our

society, irrespective of these times, and these it belongs to the friends of education, and to institutions of learning, to correct; for it is one of their uses to mold the public sentiment, and give to the people just opinions and right desires concerning education. I judge that the principal method by which they may hope, with the Divine blessing, to achieve these great objects, is the pursuit of their aim, amid all difficulties, to make good scholars.

This is our work—to make good scholars. One of the principal difficulties we have to contend with, is the natural repugnance of so many to close thought and hard study—and there is no path to the knowledge we speak of which does not lead through these. Then we must have trouble with all of this class. The dull and the inert can not learn any thing, which requires much mental exertion, without a degree of labor very great to them; and these unhappy infirmities often preclude the irksome toil. Some of these, indeed, are blessed with a desire to obtain knowledge, and other motives, also, impel them to the effort. But it is a slow and tedious process, which seldom gathers more than a very small stock. Others of them want these motives, as they lack the capacity of quick attainments; and thus the utmost exertions to which their indifference can be moved, often come to nothing. I do not say, they had all better be at home; for at school they may learn something, and the entrance of a little light may invite a little more, until, as sometimes comes to pass, long and toilsome study receives its just reward. The heavy boy, indeed, comes out the heavy man; but, at last, his well-drilled and well-stored mind is the honorable distinction of a student and a scholar.

Those of more lively turn, and of quicker powers, from whom, for their brightness, we look for much, sometimes give still greater trouble, and wind it up in sorrowful disappointment. Such often presume on their quickness, and hope to make up thereby for the manly toil they are not willing to endure. Conscious that, with less of exertion, they could accomplish more than others of slower thought, they are improvident of time, fitful, irregular, and thus they allow themselves to be left behind, when they are able to be foremost. How can we make scholars, even of the brightest, who will not be students?

There are, unhappily, many other forms in which this aversion to close and diligent occupation in study betrays itself and obstructs our work. Some will give attention only to such studies as they fancy they have a special taste for—which are, for the most part, of easy acquisition—the more difficult being out of the line of this kind of taste. Some are given to change—persuading themselves that they have learned enough in this department, and proposing to pass into that, although they have mastered nothing. Others are too fond of company, and love to spend time in society, which ought to be given to their books. And all this trouble is greatly enhanced with many by their interest in public affairs. In full sympathy with the universal and intense agitation of the people, the young, like ourselves, are eager for the news. These themes have no place in our personal intercourse with them, and are excluded from their public exercises; but they can not be shut out from their thoughts, or stripped of the power to impede their studies. No wonder that often their minds are hardly held to their work, and easily drawn to more exciting subjects.

It is a multiform, and it is a sore evil—this dread of grappling with difficulties in the struggle for knowledge. Certainly it is our duty to meet it at every point and in every shape it takes, and to do all that may be in our power to overcome it, and to supplant it with a better spirit. And, doubtless, the wisdom and the skill of a true teacher find some of their best uses herein—to quicken sluggish insensibility into active life—to reduce the impatience of the restless and the wayward to sober and steady occupation—to strip the text-book and the blackboard of all that is repulsive, and make the recitation an agreeable entertainment. But if any, who are over us, think it easy to be done, and look for us to do it oftener than in some happy cases, we cheerfully offer them our seats, and will stand, as rulers in their stead, while they try to do it.

The young are the less to be blamed for all this, because they have not yet learned better. They are yielding to an influence natural to the most, the evil of which they can not be expected to understand, for they do not clearly perceive the uses of learning, and can not rightly estimate the value of knowledge. The fault is far greater with them who ought to know better, and

by these a principal obstruction is thrown in our way. It is the extremely inadequate view, which is taken of the whole subject by so many people, who call themselves the friends of education. I speak not in bitterness, but in sorrow, when I express the conviction, drawn from all my observation, especially as a teacher, that the public mind is sadly wanting in a clear understanding of what it is to educate our children, and in a right appreciation of its benefits. There are many parents and other persons having the control of youth, who seem to take no distinction between going to school and learning something—between the form and ceremony of attending College, and the actual acquiring of knowledge. No wonder their sons do also confound things which are totally distinct. It is not unusual for students, so called, to repair to College in expectation of gaining something—they know not what—by methods they have never considered, in seasons too brief for any object, which requires time and labor. Others, whose notions are not quite so vague or so crude, and who propose a longer time and a more liberal course, have yet no conception of being thoroughly taught. The patient, steady, rigid drilling of the mind, which is so necessary and so large a part of education, enters not into their thoughts. They say they want to learn some things, and that is all they aspire to—leaving out of their scheme, if we may call it so, the very things it were best for them to learn. The wisdom and experience of ages—the great multitude of scholars, who have made teaching their study and their work, with the general consent of the lovers of knowledge and learning, in remarkable harmony—have brought out, as their best conclusion, what we call a course of study. I do not say it is the best that is possible. It is enough for me to say, it has been received as the best that is attainable, and it is in use by principal schools of higher grade all over the country.

What is plainer than that the people who propose to educate their sons, ought to accept it gladly, and persuade them to pursue it faithfully to the letter, all through to its close? Instead of this, many a hand—the hands of the advocates of sound education, the hands of the friends of good learning, so they count themselves—we see laid upon it, to mar its beauty, and rob it of its power. And we are obliged to stand by, and let them do it.

I say I find little fault with the boys. They have heard at home, and from friends and neighbors, older and wiser than themselves, that the College course is too long, and that much of it may be left out, with little or no loss. They are allowed, if not encouraged, to attempt a short and easy method, with the strange delusion, that this will give them a respectable education.

There are youths, no doubt, whose time is very short—all that can be withdrawn from the necessities of their condition, even for the sake of knowledge—and whose circumstances, if not narrow, are at least restricted to small expenditures, but who do ardently desire to make the most of these orderings of Providence. Profound respect is due to an ingenuous youth, who bears himself with manliness and honor, in any right pursuit, and every encouragement and opportunity we can offer ought to be freely afforded to him to learn all he can, if it were for no more than an hour. But this is another matter, every way different from the choice of a brief and meager course—so like derision of the long exertion and the laborious culture which make a scholar—refused, with time enough, if life continue, and means enough at free command.

There is another form in which this shallow view of education exposes itself, closely allied to this, and not less injurious. It is the extremely imperfect state of primary instruction. So many come to us, no way prepared as they ought to be, for the classes they propose to enter. Some are so deficient in the rudiments of learning, and so poorly taught in what they think they know, that they must take lower places than they desire; and when admitted to these, they must go over what they ought to have learned long ago. And this almost makes certain a slow and halting gait throughout their journey, to say nothing of the labor of elementary instruction it unjustly imposes here, which belongs elsewhere. I offer no complaint against the teachers, from whom they come to us. Some of them have the same difficulties to contend with in their places, that trouble us in ours. These commonly give to their pupils all they are willing to receive. It is mainly due to the low, obscure, narrow views, that are so often taken of the nature, the methods, and the uses of mental cultivation; and then it comes out of the haste and impatience of the people, in the practical

education of their children, and their neglect, or unwillingness, to require them to be soundly taught in all they profess to learn.

I have thought it my duty to say so much—mournful, indeed, but its utterance not to be forborne. I have said it, not to discourage you or ourselves, our pupils or their friends, but to rouse us all to a just sense of our obligations in this great concern.

You will not, I trust, infer, from any thing that has been said, the slightest disparagement of the young gentlemen here before you. They fairly represent the youth of the country. They are just like those who have adorned these halls year after year from the beginning—not a few of whom are now the leading men in all affairs—of which all my brethren are witnesses, and some of them are examples. Some of these will make their mark in like manner. Meanwhile, as a body, they are pursuing their studies with commendable diligence, and in their general deportment they are conducting themselves, as far as I know, with exemplary propriety. I deem myself happy in having them under our care, and I congratulate you, gentlemen, who have rule over us all, on their presence in this school to-day.

III. It remains for me to say a few things concerning Government and Discipline, so far as these have been put into my hands.

It has been well said, as I believe, that the world is governed too much. I take the principles which control all things to be few and simple. The Supreme Moral Law, divinely given, is summarily comprehended in the Ten Commandments. A great expositor, who was taught of God, explaining the duties of our political and social relations, having rehearsed a few plain rules, declares that all the balance may be reduced to a single head; for, if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in one saying, which exhausts the subject. I suppose, then, that small communities, at least, are best governed by a few comprehensive rules, easily understood, easily remembered, easily observed—commending themselves to the judgment of all—kindly, but firmly enforced.

There is a fine example in the wisdom of Dr. Kane, setting out for the Polar seas. "We did not sail," he says, "under

the rules that govern our national ships; but we had our own regulations, well considered and announced beforehand, and rigidly adhered to afterward, through all the vicissitudes of the expedition. These included, first, absolute subordination to the officer in command; second, abstinence from all intoxicating liquors, except when dispensed by special order; third, the habitual disuse of profane language. We had no other laws."

It is according to this general view of the subject, that I propose to conduct the rule of this College, as I share it with my colleagues. Proceeding on such principles of government, I desire to keep, in my own heart, a spirit conformable to them; and trying to govern others, to endeavor to govern myself—remembering how Infinite Wisdom has taught us, that "the slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he that ruleth his spirit, than he that taketh a city." I assume concerning every pupil, and am slow in coming to doubt of any, that he is imbued with sentiments of virtue and honor, which make a true gentleman. I shall aim to feel toward him, as far as possible, and always to treat him, as if he were my son—offering him my counsel, as he may seem to me to need it, whether in the way of commendation, or reproof—whether as to his soul, or his studies—trying to guard him against the harm that he may do himself; and if he be likely to suffer any damage from others, doing my utmost to protect him. I shall never treat him otherwise than in a frank and open manner—despising in my heart the method of control, that would bid me watch him, or make another a spy on his actions. I greatly desire that he shall give me his confidence; and the way to win it, and to make him a just return for it, is to give him mine. I believe that, under such a rule as these thoughts suggest, our boys would govern themselves far better than we can govern them under any other. And in every case in which it wholly fails, after a fair trial, then he had better go home—if not on his own account, certainly on ours, and for the sake of his companions here. And this is often better done in a silent and quiet way, than by open and formal discipline, whether respect be had to the youth himself, to his friends, or to the College.

You will allow me the freedom of expressing my opinion

concerning certain principles, which have long had place in the government of many colleges, and which are still upheld and approved as just and wise, perhaps necessary to good discipline. If the mention of them seem needless among us, or if my views of them exceed the respectful and diffident reserve, which it becomes me to use in allusion to other Institutions, I hope to be justified by my desire to be understood on the whole subject, and by my unwillingness to appear, through my silence, to consent to principles which I think false and mischievous in application to college government. I refer to laws, which, apparently likening students in the college to citizens in the Commonwealth, subject them to like rules, in requiring them to give testimony against each other, when charged with offenses which need to be proved—laws, which, going a great way beyond this, when disorders have been committed, but suspicion has attached to none in particular, allow them all to be called on to say, whether they have taken part in these disorders—requiring each one to purge or criminate himself, under heavy penalties in case of refusal to answer. I use the mildest expressions on this subject, when I say, that I do not accept these methods of governing a college. I do not conceive of it, as of a State, with its courts, and its witnesses, and its grand juries. Still less do I conceive of its power, as stern and inexorable in its search after evil-doers. It is to me more like a family, with its pious care, its anxious oversight, and its parental government; and when I could guide it no longer with this method, and in this spirit of control, I should desire to give it up. I am obliged, then, to declare that I could have no share in executing laws, of which I have felt it my duty to speak in these terms.

I am happy to suppose, that so far as they have had any place here, it has, in the main, been as so many dead letters; and I venture to express the hope, that whenever they engage the attention of the Board of Trustees, they will be formally laid aside. These young men will take no advantage of their absence; on the contrary, if they had ever been thought of as binding, their removal will give greater dignity to all that remain, in the eyes of these ingenuous and manly youths. They know, as we do, that such laws could not be enforced, to any serious effect, among the sons of our people—the cool

judgment of the people, and the warm impulses of their sons equally against them. And for myself, I greatly desire it to be known by all, that it is not your pleasure that any part of our rule shall be conducted on these principles.

And now let me remind my brethren, that we, whom they have put in charge of this Christian College, with its solemn trusts, and its great work, need all the support your wisdom can give us every way. While we look for the direction of your counsel and authority, we earnestly ask you and your people to help us with your prayers, that, by Sovereign Grace, we may stand in our lot, and quit ourselves like men. Our fathers, where are they! Our brethren, so many of them gone from us, and we must follow them! The time that remains to us is short, and it warns us to accept the lesson of infinite wisdom and goodness, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest."

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